

LISTING AND AMENDMENT OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for isolating disseminated tumor cells from a cell-containing body fluid, ~~comprising~~ consisting essentially of passing a cell-containing body fluid or part thereof that comprises a disseminated tumor cell through a screen having a mesh or pore width of about 15 to 30 μm to separate non-cancer cells from disseminated tumor cells, wherein the disseminated tumor cells are retained on the screen ~~and are free from a separating agent that comprises a ligand for isolation~~, and wherein the body fluid is selected from the group consisting of blood and bone marrow.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to either claim 1 or claim 3, wherein the screen has a mesh or pore width of about 20 μm .

3. (Currently Amended) A method for isolating disseminated tumor cells from a cell-containing body fluid, ~~comprising~~ consisting essentially of separating cellular components from non-cellular components in a body fluid that comprises a disseminated tumor cell to obtain a cell-containing fraction; resuspending the cell-containing fraction in a suspension medium; and passing the resuspended cell-containing fraction through a screen having a mesh or pore width of about 15 to 30 μm to separate non-cancer cells from disseminated tumor cells, wherein the disseminated tumor cells are retained on the screen ~~and are free from a separating agent that comprises a ligand for isolation~~, and wherein the body fluid is selected from the group consisting of blood and bone marrow.

4. ~~(Currently Amended)~~ (Previously Presented) The method according to either claim 1 or claim 3, comprising removing from the screen the retained disseminated tumor cells.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein removing the retained disseminated tumor cells comprises passing a liquid through the screen in a direction opposite to that in which the body fluid or part thereof or resuspended cell-containing fraction is passed, to obtain a cell-containing wash liquid.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to either claim 1 or claim 3, wherein the body fluid is blood.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to either claim 1 or claim 3, wherein the body fluid is bone marrow.

8. - 21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 3, wherein the cell-containing fraction is ~~isolated~~ obtained by subjecting the body fluid to density gradient centrifugation.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (New) The method according to either claim 1 or claim 3, wherein the disseminated tumor cells are not modified prior to screening by labeling, by attaching particles, by triggering aggregation, by triggering cluster formation, with antibodies, enzymes, lectins, other ligands, other receptors or cross linking agents or by fixing.

25. (New) The method according to either claim 1 or claim 3, wherein the material of the screen allows disseminated tumor cells to be isolated essentially unaltered.

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26. (New) The method according to claim 1 or claim 3, where the mesh size and pore width are such as to allow non cancer cells to pass but to retain at least some of the disseminated tumor cells on the screen.

27. (New) The method according to Claim 3 where the cell containing fraction obtained constitutes mononuclear cells obtained by density gradient separation and washing and the cell containing fraction which is resuspended constitutes the washed density gradient separated mononuclear cells.